THE YEMENITE JEWS

By JOSHUA FELDMANN

PUBLISHED ON BEHALF OF THE
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The photographs on pages 13, 16, 26, 28, *are from the collection of the Vienna "Jüdische Zeitung," "Palästina im Bilde."*

Preface.

A FEW years ago an event occurred that attracted the attention of Jewish circles far and wide. The Alliance Israélite Universelle sent one of its most able teachers, Yom-Tov Zemach, to Yemen to study the conditions of the Jews who are languishing there in misery and the means necessary for their amelioration. The emissary of the Alliance discharged his commission satisfactorily and fully justified the confidence placed in him. He spent a few months in the country, observed everything with vigilant eyes and wrote a most interesting report.

It was certainly not the fault of Yom-Tov Zemach that he was unable to make any practical proposals for relieving the deplorable situation of the Jews of Yemen. He recommended only one remedy, which betrayed the pedagogue, namely, the establishment of an Alliance school in Sanaa, the Turkish capital of Yemen. He knew quite well that the founding of a school in Sanaa could not exercise very much influence upon the lot of the Jews dispersed in some hundreds of places in South Arabia. He also knew full well that the Jews in Yemen are not the masters of their own destiny, but rather the prey of their barbarous surroundings. He likewise realised the danger that lay in acquainting the young Jews of Yemen with a different mode of life from that customary in their native land, as such knowledge, to use his expression, would have made them regard themselves as "*déclassés*." But he was nevertheless unable to make any other proposal than the establishment of a school, and even this has so far remained merely a pious wish.

But in the meantime the Jews of Yemen have pondered upon their fate themselves and sought another way out. Three years ago a company of about 300 Yemenite Jews landed one day in Jaffa, the most important harbour of Palestine. They came from Heidan-Ashäm, a place situated far away in the north-east of Yemen, after a toilsome journey of a few months, and arrived in a terribly ragged and exhausted condition. In all probability many women and children, overcome by the fatigue of the long march, had succumbed on the road and were laid to their final rest. Those who arrived in Palestine soon found employment in the colonies near Jaffa, Rishon-le-Zion and Rechoboth, as labourers, where they were able to lead a quiet, contented and human existence. This event soon became a signal for the exodus of their fellow-Jews from Yemen. Last year alone 2,000 Yemenites arrived in Palestine, all of whom, with the exception of a small number who remained in the towns, settled as labourers in the Jewish colonies.

In the following pages an attempt will be made to give an account of the lot of the Jews in Yemen and of their settlement in Palestine as urban and rural labourers.

JOSHUA FELDMANN.

JAFFA, NACHLATH BENJAMIN,
Shebat 5673 (*January*, 1913).

Landing of Yemenite Immigrants at Jaffa.

I.—Historical Survey.

UNTIL quite recently South Arabia was a comparatively unknown country even in the scientific world, but a change has been brought about in this respect since a few men summoned the courage to explore the country despite great dangers. A prominent part in this work of exploration has been taken by Jewish scholars, namely, the Orientalists Joseph Halevy and Eduard Glaser. We know now that for several centuries there were two great empires in South Arabia, the Sabaean and the Minæan, which reached a high level of culture and civilisation, though of the ancient grandeur and magnificence described in glowing colours in South Arabian legends there are now only ruins left. The great empires perished, and in their place arose small states which were mostly of brief duration and constantly engaged in war with one another. The effects upon the distressed and exploited population inevitably followed: agriculture, industry and trade rapidly declined, though manual work found a refuge among the Jews. But a great change took place when the Turks entered the country forty years ago. As they represent a different sect of Mohammedanism from the majority of the inhabitants of North Yemen they have not yet succeeded in establishing their sovereignty. Constant conflicts with the rebels render the Government powerless and prevent it from carrying out any reforms. The people, in order not to lose favour with either party, find themselves compelled to pay taxes not only to the Turks but also to an Imam, and often to several Imams.

Unfortunately the Jewish travellers in South Arabia have not cleared up the interesting question at what time the Jews settled in Yemen. The tradition of the local

Jews records that their ancestors came to Yemen forty-two years before the destruction of the First Temple. It further states that Ezra, as he was about to build the Second Temple, sent a message to the Jews of Yemen calling upon them to return to Palestine, but they declined the invitation on the ground that the final salvation had not yet come. Ezra was thereupon angry with them and prophesied that they would never enjoy permanent peace in Yemen, and that their wealth would not endure. Oral tradition, moreover, states that the Jews came into the country as warriors and that they built the city of Sanaa, which bears the ancient Hebrew name "Udal" in their poems. They are said to have remained masters of Sanaa until the advent of Mohammed, who fought against the city and conquered it. This tradition is dealt with in detail by Jacob Saphir, of Jerusalem (1822–1886), who spent over two years in Yemen before Joseph Halevy, and devoted a special study to the Jewish conditions.* It is certain that the settlement of the Jews in Yemen is very old, that they had their own rulers for a certain period, and that their religion exercised a powerful attraction over the local tribes before the advent of Mohammed, so that a Yemenite king with his entire court went over to Judaism in the fifth century. Only lately an announcement appeared in the newspapers that ancient coins recording Jewish rulers had been found.

It is known that Maimonides (died 1204) engaged in a lively correspondence with the Jews of Yemen, of whom, in his "Iggereth Teman" (Message to Yemen) he speaks in terms of praise. It is also known that during the lifetime of Maimonides they inserted the following words in the Kaddish: "by the life of our teacher Moses, the son of Maimun." It is, however, less known that the Talmud does not belong to the fundamentals of their religious life. Before Maimonides they cultivated only the Mishnah, and they afterwards unreservedly declared his work as the

* "Eben Sappir," Lyck, 1866.

highest authority in religious matters. It must be observed that although the Yemenite Jews were averse from all "Pilpul" (dialectics) as well as from all strained logical argumentation, they showed intellectual vigour in other respects and have made original contributions in the field of Hebrew poetry. Their most important poet, Mori Salim Shevsi, was revered by them as a saint who still worked miracles from his grave; those in need of his help and healing swarmed in hundreds to his tomb near Taiz.

It seems like a miracle that this scattered fragment of the Jewish people has defied the tribulations of centuries, pursued its own religious life and created its own literature, ceremonies and synagogue chants and melodies.

II.—The Condition of the Jews in Yemen.

"Is wisdom no more in Teman?" (Jeremiah, cap. 49). A traveller who has recently visited the Jews in Yemen has given utterance to his impressions in the following terms: "How strange and sad was the fate of the Jews in Yemen! For two thousand years they sat there in bitter exile, as they expressed themselves. Countless generations pass by without the end of the exile coming into sight. No ray of hope, no message of comfort, cruel kings and Imams, ceaseless wandering to and fro, the distress of famine, town and country laid waste, disputes between the rulers fought out upon the backs of the Jews, and the cruelty of the forced conversion of entire communities. It is a darkness without end, but also not without a will-o'-the-wisp. Out of the bosom of distress arise Messiahs who awake hopes among the people. But soon the dream is over, and at times the end is terribly tragic."

In his diary Yom-Tov Zemach wrote on March 2nd, 1910:

"*Sanaa.*—I am here now more than a week. I have made myself acquainted with the life of the Jews in all its phases. The first impression has become more and more strengthened; they are exceedingly unfortunate

beings. They all have a knowledge of the Torah, but they are utterly ignorant of modern civilisation. They have forgotten what honour and respect signify. If they are abused they listen in silence as though they had not understood; if they are attacked by an Arab boy with stones they flee.

" . . . I undertook a census of the Jews here, and found that they number 2,700 souls. What a decline! Only a short time ago there were 10,000 Jews in Sanaa." Thereupon Zemach describes the terrible drama of the famine of 1905, the siege of the rebel Imam Yachye, the unparalleled rise of prices for food, and the death from starvation which raged among the Jews and the Turks. " The old men and children were the first victims. Many died a sudden death. . . . Many lay down to sleep and did not wake again. . . . Parents buried their own children for want of sufficient grave-diggers. In the cemetery there were long rows of graves prepared for the dead who were awaited daily."

Let us turn from this picture of misery and try to give a survey of the general situation.

The number of the Jews in Yemen consists of about 8,000 families (about 30,000 souls) who are scattered over a few hundred places. Only in Aden and Sanaa are there large communities; for the rest they live in small towns and villages. Three-fourths of all the Jews are artisans: tailors, shoemakers, weavers, goldsmiths, potters, masons, makers of handmills, brickmakers, workers in tobacco and powder, joiners, smiths, &c. A European Jew can hardly conceive how modest are the requirements of his co-religionists in South Arabia. Even a " rich " Yemenite does not eat more than one course at a meal on a weekday; and the Yemenite immigrants in Palestine who are employed in domestic service must be trained to eat an adequate meal. As for clothing, they are content with a single shirt. But despite their very modest requirements and their unflagging industry and diligence they are unable

to earn the minimum for their existence, and hunger is a frequent guest.

Zemach writes: "The material position of the inhabitants is on the whole very bad, especially that of the Jews. The land is impoverished: centuries of wars and revolts, hunger and cholera, have laid the land waste. There is a lack of industrious labourers. One may journey for days and see fine soil lying uncultivated on every side. If one enters a dwelling one is at once struck by the poverty. There is a complete lack of furniture, crockery, bedding, food and clothing." He asks the question: "How could the Jews endure all this misery and distress?" and answers it much in the same way as Jacob Saphir: "The Moslems could not do without the Jews as they alone are handworkers. On the other hand, the Jews were borne up by the hope in their redemption, as well as by the idea that their sufferings are trials imposed by God, in order that the human soul might emerge from them purified and ennobled."

Besides these general conditions there are other considerations one must take into account if one wishes to obtain a proper insight into the disconsolate position of the Jews in Yemen. Religious fanaticism has unchecked sway in this country, as the sect of the Seides (an extreme development of the fanatical Sunnites) is predominant there; and this fanaticism finds vent for its accumulated passion in the relations to the small Jewish minority. The Jew is officially called in the legal terminology "the common fellow." A number of the laws aimed at the Jews can easily be explained as the outcome of religious fanaticism. Besides, a population which is on a low level of culture, which has no intellectual occupation and distraction, and which has an abundance of leisure at its disposal, is easily moved by brutal instincts which find an outlet in tormenting the weak minority and treating them as pariahs. Thus we find a series of ridiculous but insulting regulations, particularly in regard to clothing and social intercourse, which have their explanation in this circumstance. The

situation is, as a matter of fact, exactly as it was found forty-eight years ago by Jacob Saphir, who wrote:—

"The Jews who have been living in Yemen for many hundreds, perhaps even thousands of years, are now in a position of inferiority, and are oppressed by a people which

Yemenite Watchman upon National Fund Estate.

declares itself holy and pious but which is very brutal, barbarous, and hard-hearted. The natives consider the Jew unclean, but his blood is for them not unclean. They lay claim to all his belongings, and if he is unwilling they employ force. They therefore do not let the Jews live in their fortified towns, in order that they should not defile their homes and that the property of the Jews should not enjoy the protection of the city walls. The Jews therefore

live outside the towns in dark dwellings like prison cells or caves out of fear for murderers and robbers. Whoever has any money or valuables conceals them in the earth or in such secret holes as they have in their little houses so that nobody may see them. If anything is stolen of a Jew and the Cadi hears of it, he has the Jew arrested in order that he may produce the thief, or at least name him so that the culprit may be subjected to punishment. If the Jew cannot give the name of the thief because he has not seen him, and is also afraid of his revenge, he is punished with a severe fine because of his obstinacy. The consequence of this is that the Jews hush up any theft that is committed among them in order that the Cadi may not hear of it. But this does not always succeed, as the thief himself occasionally makes the thing known; and besides, there is no lack of informers in lawless countries.

"It is particularly bad for the Jew if he is himself accused of a crime. There is then no mercy. For the least offence he is sentenced to outrageous fines, which he is quite unable to pay. In case of non-payment he is put into chains and cruelly beaten every day. Before the punishment is inflicted the Cadi addresses him in gentle tones and urges him to change his faith and obtain a share of all the glory of this world and of the world beyond. His refusal is again regarded as penal obstinacy. On the other hand, it is not open to the Jew to prosecute a Moslem, as the Moslem by right of law can dispose of the life and property of the Jew, and it is only to be regarded as an act of magnanimity if the Jews are allowed to live. The Jew is not admissible as a witness nor has his oath any validity.*

* As the evidence of a Jew is not valid he could obtain redress if he had Moslems as witnesses. But this is impossible in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, as it is considered dishonourable for a Moslem in Yemen, especially among the Seides, to give evidence on behalf of a Jew and against another Moslem. Zemach relates five cases of violence against Jews which took place in his presence in Sanaa between April 15th and May 13th, 1910 (that is, at a time when the Turks were masters of the town), and which occurred as follows:

"If a Jew meets a Moslem of any class whatsoever he must greet him and address him as his master. If he does not do this he is beaten without mercy. A Jew is not allowed to ride upon a donkey, still less upon a camel (there are no vehicles in Yemen). The Jews must go on foot like slaves, even when they have long journeys before them. The Seides say that the Jews must not molest the animals which are better than they are. They also do not allow the Jews to wear white, or red, or green clothing, as they consider this the dress of the ruling class. Only on the Sabbath and on Jewish festivals, on which they remain entirely in their dwellings, where no Moslem is among them, do they clothe themselves in white garments. The rich Jews must also appear poor, so that they may not provoke envy and expose themselves to plunder. They must constantly appear poor, submissive, and servile like slaves.

"In the larger towns there are vapour-baths for Moslems. The Jews are not allowed to bathe there, but they are obliged to heat these baths with human dung whilst the Moslems themselves use animal dung for heating purposes In short, the sufferings of the Jews in Yemen baffle all

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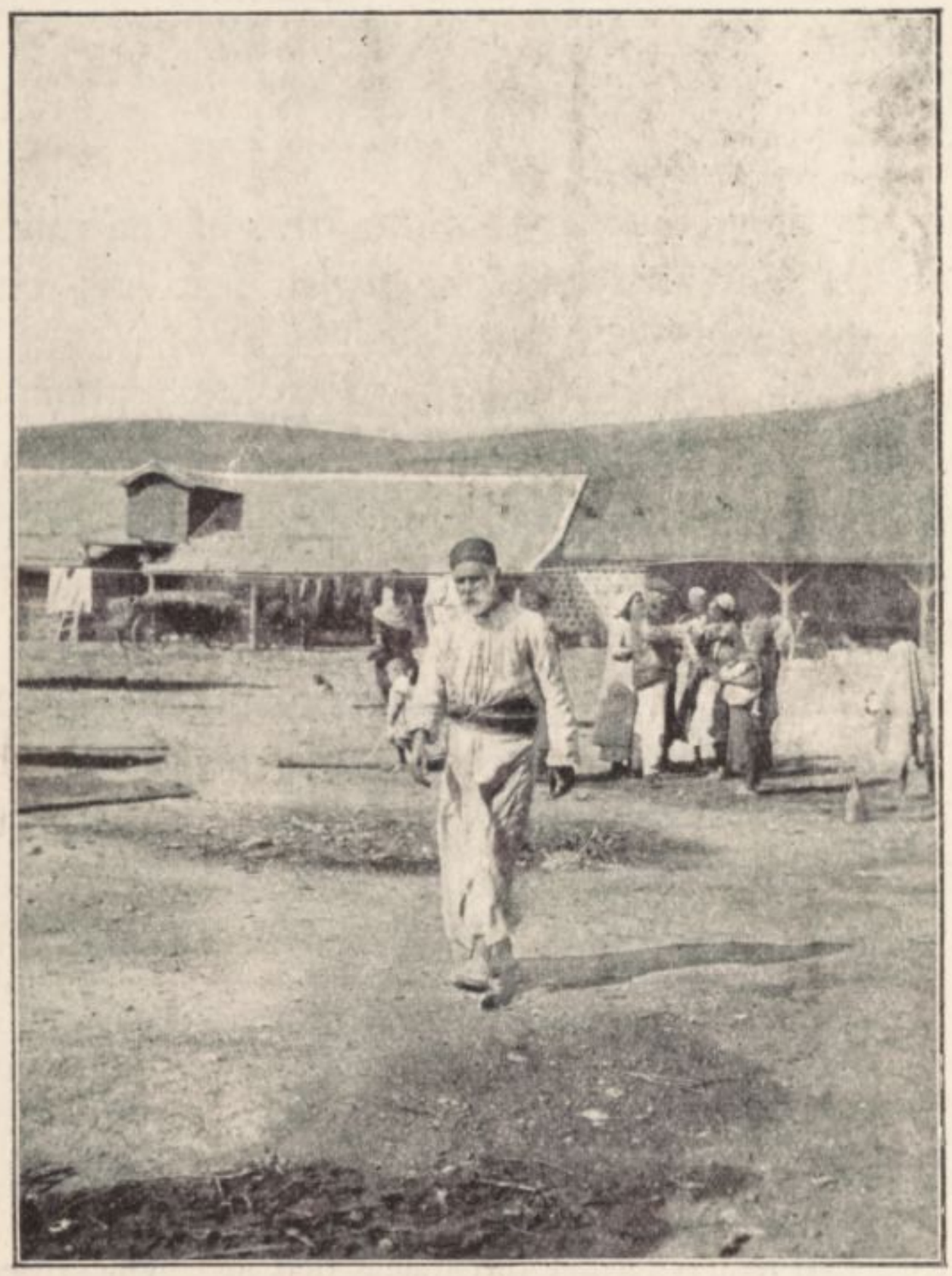
Case 1, April 15th: A Jew is beaten by a Moslem. He has no witnesses but he shows his wounds. The Moslem is acquitted. Case 2, April 22nd: A Jew is cruelly beaten without any ground. His pitiful cry is heard in the distance. As he is respected, several Moslems assure him that they will give evidence on his behalf. He incurs legal costs, but the witnesses do not appear, and the Moslem goes scot free. Case 3, May 2nd: A Jew is terribly assaulted and is further threatened that he will be prosecuted for violence. He kisses the feet of the Moslem and is then allowed to go on his way. Case 4, May 3rd: A Jew is robbed of his dog and is beaten. No witnesses. Case 5, May 13th: A Jew rides on his donkey outside the town. Two Moslems order him to alight from the donkey and severely illtreat him. In the court the Jew has to pay a few francs fine.

Zemach discussed these conditions with the Turkish officials in Sanaa, and they said to him: "We cannot order the Cadi to recognise Jewish evidence—that would be against the religious law!" The Cadi, for his part, said that he is a friend of the Jews and that if the Moslems presented themselves in court he would insist upon their telling the truth, but he could not compel them to appear as witnesses.

It is interesting to note that a high Turkish official confidentially observed to Zemach: "The Seides still look upon the Jews as the people of the Holy Book whilst they regard the Turks as unbelievers.

description. Even in the Holy Land things did not look rosy before 1830, as I know from my own experience. But in comparison with Yemen even Palestine could then be regarded as the land of freedom, as in the former country the Jew is regarded as a hated prey." Thus far Jacob



Yemenites on Kinereth Farm.

Saphir in his account of forty-eight years ago ("Eben Sappir," page 52).

In addition to these chronic sufferings caused by human malice there are also strokes of misfortune due to the economic conditions. We have seen that the country has remained quite stagnant. The only occupation of the inhabitants is agriculture, which is not carried on beyond the necessary minimum. The Jews

are the manual workers and provide the peasants with the manufactures they require, repair their ploughs and weapons, weave their shirts, and so forth. They are repaid for this after the harvest, if all goes well, with a portion of the harvested durrah. This is the case if there is a good harvest. But what happens if the harvest is a failure? It then often occurs that the fellah has a sufficient amount of corn at his disposal to sustain himself throughout the year; but the Jew, who only forms a secondary consideration, is literally denied even a morsel of bread. In such cases, and also when hostilities between the rulers break out, the Jew is forced to wander occasionally to some other place in Yemen. But this is not always possible, as he sometimes has his entire property in the hands of the fellah, and he cannot change his place of abode without further ado. In this case death from starvation often ensues. "Nothing moves the Jewish traveller so much," writes a Jewish explorer, "as the sight of many places where the entire Jewish inhabitants have been carried off by the last famine. The average rate of mortality is terrible." "We see no grandchildren," is the complaint of the people. Hence it is that the Jews there, despite early marriages (and even occasional polygamy) do not increase.

If one reflects upon the fanatical persecution described above and the hopeless economic position, one can appreciate the whole misery of the Yemenite Jews. It must, however, be mentioned that the native rulers in some places are occasionally friendly towards the Jews; but this has naturally no serious effect upon the lot of the Jews, as they have the instincts of the people against them, and the tolerant rulers are soon followed by others of a different disposition.

The effect of the political events of the last few years in Constantinople upon the situation in Yemen is a question of particular importance. The Jews of Yemen, from motives of self-preservation, remained loyal to the Turkish

Government throughout the whole period since the occupation of the country by the Turks and especially during the long-continued feud with the Imam Yichya. "The Jews of Yemen," said the *Osmanischer Lloyd* of Constantinople on July 9th, 1912, "have shown a pronounced devotion towards the Turkish Government throughout the hostilities between the Imams of the country and the Government." This sympathy for the Turkish cause has often cost the Jews heavy sacrifices. For example, a well-to-do Jew in Yemen, the head of a respected community, owing to his devotion to the Turkish cause, was killed with all his relatives, and the property of the family was confiscated by the then victorious Imam Yichya. His son was kept a prisoner of the Imam for eighteen months, as the latter wished to find out from him where the money of his father was hidden, and he was only rescued thanks to an unexpected victory of the Turkish arms.

If the Turkish Government, which has indeed conquered Yemen but has not yet acquired it, has done precious little for the Jews there, the latter knew only too well from what direction they could expect something in the future. Even in the time of Abdul Hamid Turkey might be considered a legally-regulated State in comparison with the despotism of the tribal rulers and petty Imams. And when political freedom dawned in Turkey the hearts of the Yemenite Jews were stirred with hope. It must be admitted that the new *régime* did bethink itself of the Jews to a little extent. For example, a teacher for the Turkish language was engaged by the Talmud Torah of Sanaa at the expense of the Government at a salary of 100 francs a month. Think what a revolution that meant in Sanaa! But when the unfortunate war in Tripoli broke out and the disturbances at home increased the Turkish Government found itself forced to make peace with the Imam Yichya so that it could concentrate the whole of its military troops in Yemen in attacking Sir Idris. It was bad for the Jews, however, that they were not thought

of at the time when peace was concluded. "It now seems," wrote the cautious *Osmanischer Lloyd*, "that the Jews have been thrown into an evil plight by the agreement concluded with the Imam Yichya, as the latter, who was allowed a free hand over the region inhabited by the Seïdes, is apparently inclined to punish them for the loyalty they have shown to the Government."

All the old decrees and prohibitions were again revived. Again a Jew may not pass on the right side of a Moslem, but must always keep on his left. Again the decree that no Jew may wear stockings, and so forth. In Sanaa the representative of the Imam hit upon the idea of demanding taxes for forty years from the Jews—*i.e.*, for the whole time in which Turkey governed there, upon the ground that the land belonged to the Imam. The amount in question is £10,000, and the matter has not yet been settled. From another town a respected head of the community writes: "The position of the Government here is very much weakened. The officials of the Imam oppress Israel and level the most ridiculous accusations upon the Jews. Hence every Jew sells his belongings as well as he can and emigrates to Palestine. In cases in which the non-Jews will not buy from them they leave their goods behind them and put their trust in God. When we received the letters from Palestine warning the people here to exercise more patience, we sent them to the villages where the people received them, but they paid no heed to the warning." Another letter states that when the Jews cannot find purchasers for their houses they destroy them and sell the wood. The Yemenites who come to Palestine declare that no letters of any kind will check the emigration, as it is a matter of life and faith.

Yom-Tov Zemach relates that when he was in Hodeida (in South Arabia) he was visited by a Jew from the village of Malchan whom he afterwards wished to call upon at his home. When the Yemenite heard this he became very sad and, clasping Zemach about the knees, he implored

him to abandon this intention. Zemach then asked him: "How do you live there?" "We are in *Golus* (exile)," he replied. "We are used to suffering. We are not men, but wretched beings."

"These words," says Zemach, "were spoken in such a tone of bitter despair that they pierced me to the marrow. This man whom I see before me for the first time and who

Yemenite Shepherd at Ben-Shemen.

is so different from me in dress, demeanour, and ideas, is my brother—I feel this—is a Jew like me. He bows before bitter necessity, but he hopes for the day of redemption. I said to myself: We are obliged to bring all possible sacrifices in order to help this unfortunate Jew and his fellow-sufferers." To help—but how?

We have seen that the Jews of Yemen believe that they have found a way to relief, and that 2,000 of them have already traversed that way. It is now time for us to turn our attention to the Yemenites in Palestine.

III.—The Importance of the Yemenite Jews for the Development of Palestine.

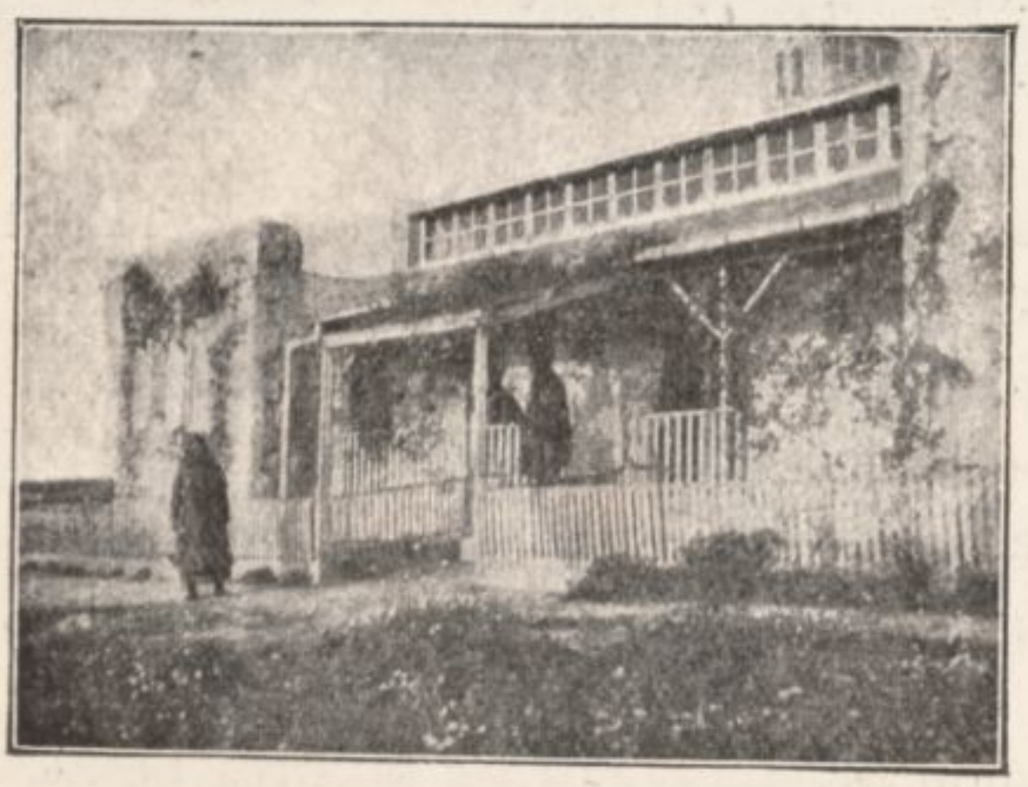
If one were to classify the Jews of all countries according to the degree of their love for Palestine, the Yemenite Jews would have to occupy the leading position. The veneration of Palestine as a holy land assigned to the Jews by God is, in general, a principle of Jewish tradition, but it seems to have acquired a particularly strong hold upon the Jews in Yemen. Or have the Jews in this country, throughout the centuries of their misery, instinctively felt that their salvation would come only from Palestine?

The first large immigration of Yemenite Jews into Palestine took place thirty years ago, in 1882. The journey, which had to be made by a very devious route, occupied not less than seven months. When the immigrants arrived in Jerusalem, the heads of the Jewish community, which was still very small then and had no charitable institutions, were utterly at a loss what to do. For many months the Yemenites had to spend the night in the open air, and a long time passed before they accustomed themselves to their new conditions. But by their industry and their modest requirements they showed that Jews in Jerusalem can live without the aid of the Chaluka. They soon found employment in house-building, and this caused the Alliance Israélite Universelle to come to their help by constructing for them a special quarter. The cottages consisted of one room and a kitchen, together with a yard surrounded by a fence. The quarter was provided with three cisterns. Each of the cottages cost a total of £64, and each tenant undertook to pay a monthly rental of 24 piastres besides the house-tax demanded by the Government.

The migration to Jerusalem, and in consequence also to Jaffa, continued. The first immigrants sent for their relatives and friends, and these were also joined by others. The better conditions in Palestine soon exercised a favour-

able influence upon the Yemenites. They became invigorated in body and mind; and, thanks to their industry, willingness, and obedience, they were much sought after as workmen both by the Ashkenazic and Sephardic population. As they also marry in Palestine comparatively early, they rapidly increase in numbers; whilst their mortality has diminished in comparison with the rate in Yemen. Thus large Yemenite communities have gradually arisen in Jerusalem and in Jaffa. The Yemenite congregation in Jerusalem has even had a Rabbi of its own for some years. Their position in this city has been particularly benefited by the establishment of the well-known school of arts and crafts, the Bezalel, in which they are capable workers. It is gratifying to see the Yemenite greybeards after the day's work learning to draw at the evening classes. A Bezalel colony consisting entirely of Yemenites has even been founded already at Ben Shemen, near Jaffa, where they are employed in a filigree workshop

The most ardent wish of the Yemenites in the towns is to possess a home of their own, however modest. As the cottages of the Alliance Israélite, which were only built in Jerusalem, did not by any means suffice, and the majority of the Yemenites had not enough means even to build a cottage of the humblest character in the usual style, they devised a new style of building, in which a great part is played by the petroleum box which finds so many uses in the East. The wooden parts of the box are partly used for the walls, whilst the leaden portions of the petroleum holders



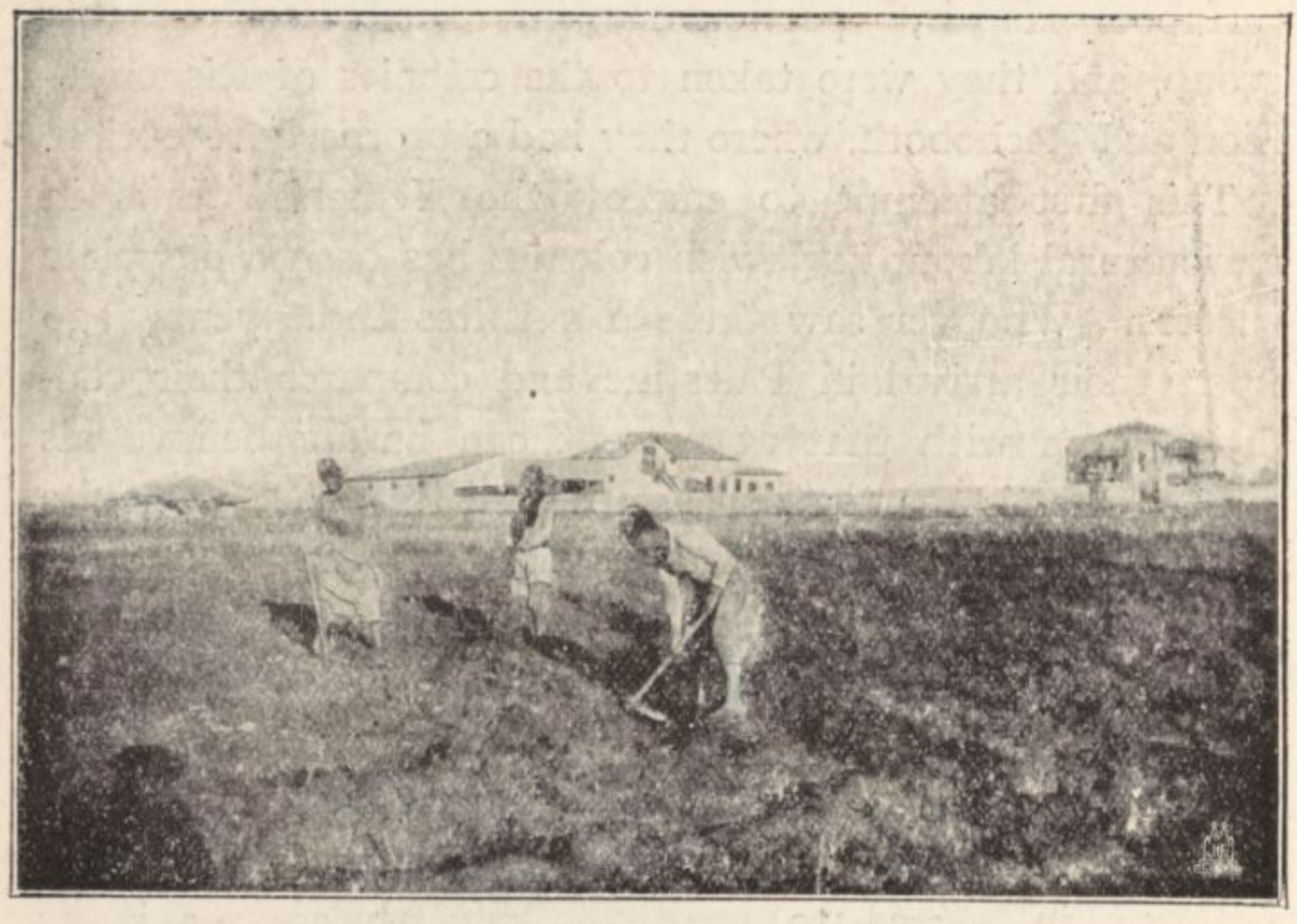
Filigree Workshop at Ben-Shemen.

(there are two in each box) are used to protect the walls against rain as well as for the purpose of roofing.

Until three years ago the Yemenites who migrated to Palestine settled only in Jerusalem or Jaffa, but since then a change has taken place. About three years ago a company of about 300 Yemenites arrived in Jaffa with the intention of settling there or in another town, but the local Jews conceived the idea of settling them on the land as agricultural labourers. The Workmen's Union, "Hapoel Hazair," particularly interested itself in this group, and they were taken to the colonies of Rishon-le-Zion and Rechoboth, where they had a brotherly reception.

This first attempt to employ the Yemenite Jews in agricultural labour in Jewish colonies has been a complete success. Whoever saw these Yemenites three years ago upon their arrival in Palestine and compares their condition then with that at present can hardly believe his eyes. One is particularly impressed by the Yemenite quarter in Rechoboth. The 25 cottages that now exist there are for the most part exceedingly primitive and insanitary, as their builders had little money and were therefore restricted to the scantiest requirements. The site and the height of the walls are therefore confined to the minimum. The improvement of the tenants of these cottages in regard to health is nevertheless manifest; one has only to contrast them with the new immigrants in order to notice the striking difference. All these cottages are surrounded with vegetable gardens which are cultivated with exemplary industry. Trees for timber and ornamental purposes have also been planted in the gardens, giving the cottages a delightful charm. Those who received loans for the erection of their cottages have promptly paid their instalments. Nay, there are even some among them who only arrived three years ago and have already saved money. They are all busily at work; the man labours in the garden and in the field, the wife washes and bakes for the colonists, and the children also find

remunerative employment. A few who were artisans at home also practise their occupation in the colony. It is noteworthy that they show no liking for petty shopkeeping, in which about 50 per cent. of East European Jews are engaged. Thus, in a rather larger colony comprising 150 Yemenites there are two Arab shopkeepers, whilst the Yemenites are occupied only as labourers or artisans. It is a matter of regret that nothing has yet been done for the



Young Yemenites on Hulda Farm.

education of the Yemenite children, who are already put to work at an age when they should still be at school. But although they are denied the advantages of a good education they show the benefit of their new surroundings in Palestine by speaking a classical Hebrew and displaying a cheerful industry at work.

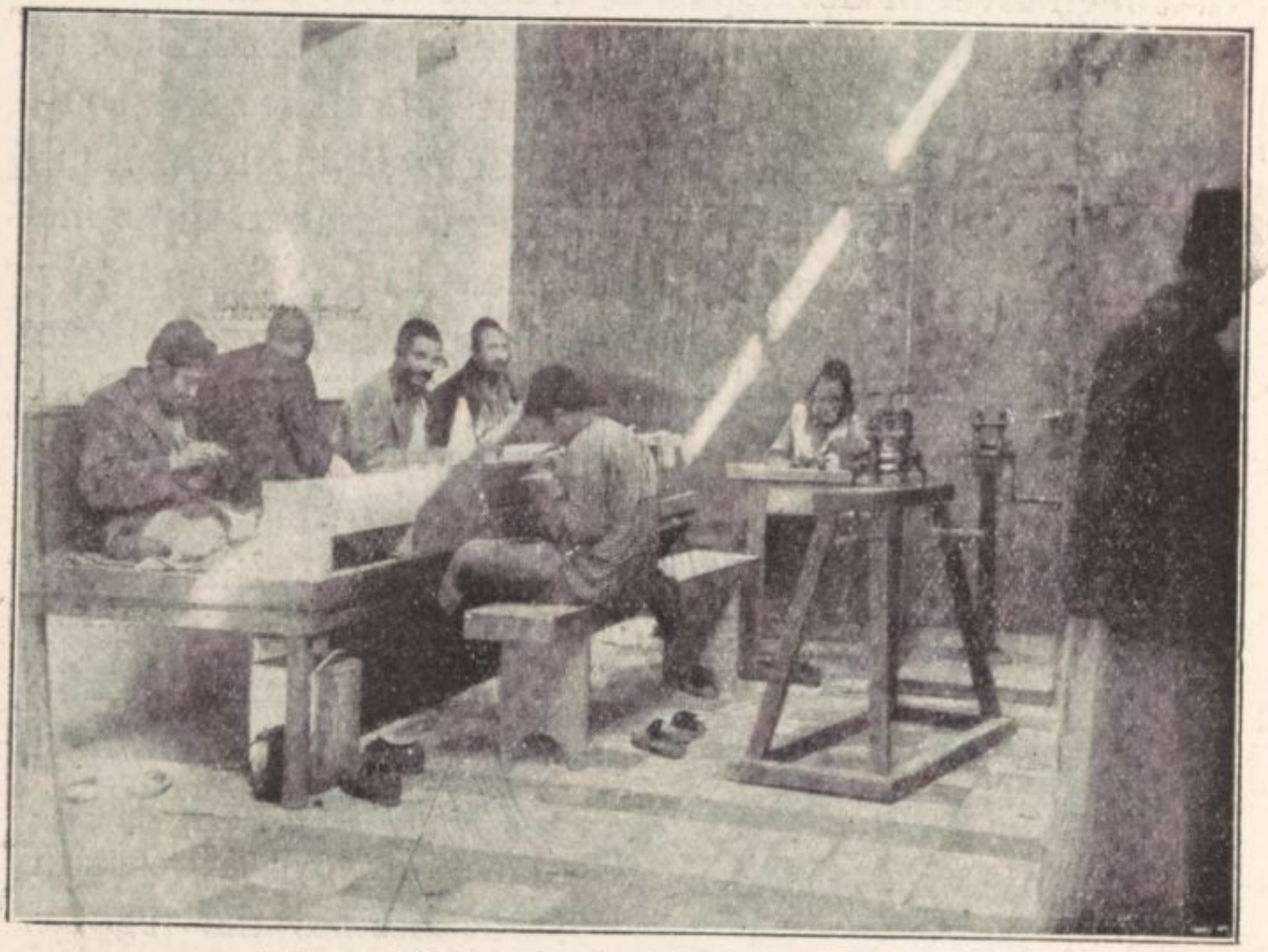
It is obvious that the satisfactory progress made by the Yemenites in Rishon-le-Zion and Rechoboth cannot have failed to produce an impression upon their brethren at home, with whom they conducted a lively correspondence. The impetus provided by this correspondence was strength-

ened by the persecutions in Yemen, which became worse every day. Thus a steady immigration has gone on during the past year, which has brought about 120 souls a month into Palestine, an influx that is partly to be explained by the relatively low cost of the journey from Yemen to Palestine.

This comparatively large immigration of Yemenites has been greeted with profound gratification by all clear-sighted people in Palestine, who recognise that in their migration to Palestine lay their only salvation. For though Palestine may not by any means have reached that high level of development in agriculture and industry which it can attain by reason of its natural conditions, it can nevertheless easily provide a place of refuge for 1,000–1,200 oppressed Yemenites each year even in the present circumstances. If one further remembers that Palestine is now in a stage of economic advancement (as is adequately shown by the annual increase of imports and exports) one is justified in cherishing great hopes in this regard, and in speaking of this immigration as the return home of the forgotten Yemenite stock of South Arabia.

Apart from these philanthropic grounds there were other reasons that produced a general satisfaction in regard to the immigration of the Yemenites. This was especially the case in those Jewish colonies of Palestine in which the cultivation of plantations occupies a prominent place. The colony of Petach-Tikvah alone employs at certain times of the year over 3,000 hands besides the regular labourers, who are drawn from a radius of 15 miles. But this system is attended by serious disadvantages. The fellah has no needs, and thus takes almost all his wages home with him. This means, if we reckon the average wage of a labourer as one franc a day, that the colony of Petach-Tikvah must pay out 3,000 francs per day in wages for several months in the year, without a corresponding portion of the money flowing back into the colony in the form of the purchase of goods or provisions. The unhealthiness of such a state of affairs is obvious. Moreover,

in many a season of employment, in which the fellah has urgent work to do in his own village, wages rise enormously in consequence of the scarcity of labourers and the fellaheen dictate terms according to their pleasure. These conditions which, in view of the growing range of the plantations in our colonies with their increasing demand for labourers, must prove almost ruinous to our agriculture, have often suggested the idea of creating a Jewish labour element in our colonies in order to make ourselves gradually independent of the surrounding Arab population. It was



Filigree Workers in the Ben-Shemen Colony.

therefore a source of gratification that through the immigration of the Yemenites, who are at the same time Turkish citizens and should therefore reckon upon the encouragement of the Government, this labour question could be solved.

But whilst there was satisfaction on all sides with the immigration of the Yemenites into Palestine, there soon arose a difficulty which had a very disturbing and disquieting effect and which can only be removed by the self-sacrifice of the Jews outside Palestine.

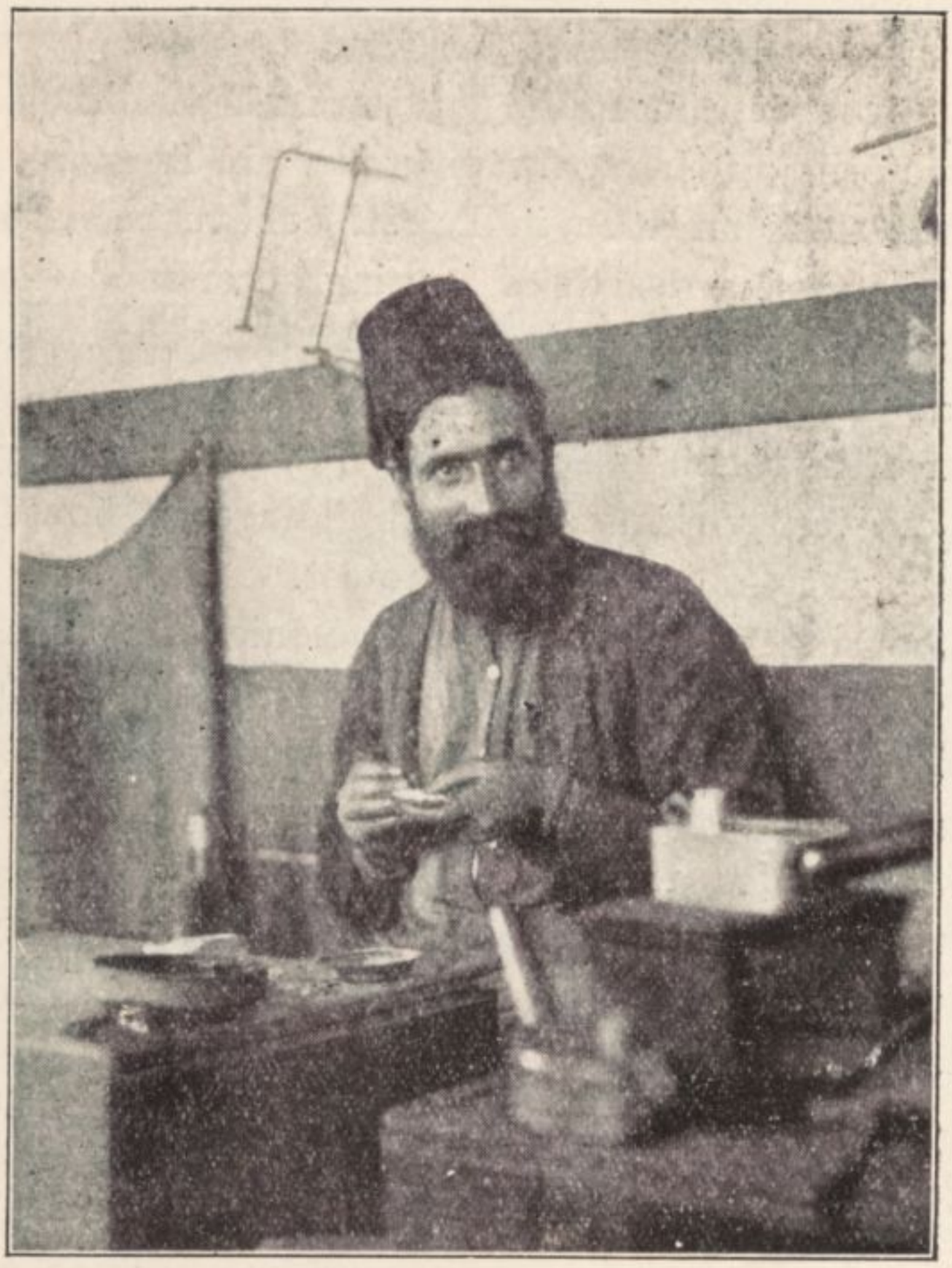
IV.—The Housing Question.

A GREAT deal has been written in recent times about Palestine, and the number of Jewish tourists who visit the country in order to become acquainted with it from personal observation is also increasing. Palestine is nevertheless a completely unknown land to most Jews, who have no proper conception of its real conditions. The great majority of Jews, for example, are ignorant of the fact, that their brethren in Palestine have been suffering from a distressing dearth of housing accommodation both in town and country during the last few years. In Jaffa alone about £80,000 has been spent by Jews upon the erection of new houses in the last few years, and yet the rent is constantly rising and the building of a house yields as much as 15–20 per cent. interest.

The housing conditions in the colonies are even much worse. They form the most burning question for the Yemenite immigrants, and if this is not speedily solved a very serious state of affairs may arise. The following figures speak for themselves. The colony of Chederah contains altogether 30 colonists' families, and there are already more than 60 Yemenite families working there. In Petach-Tikvah nearly 300 Yemenite immigrants have settled, whilst Rechoboth which numbers 70 colonists now has 80 Yemenite families. The conditions in the other large colonies are about the same. For the present the Yemenites have been accommodated in provisional shelters, partly in sheds made of straw matting; but it is clear that these temporary measures can serve only for the summer and must prove altogether inadequate in the winter. The building of cottages for the Yemenites must therefore be speedily taken in hand if they are to be protected in the rainy season from all the maladies and even human sacrifice which the dearth of dwellings will bring in its train.

This danger was recognised by everybody in Palestine, and hence the institution which is ever ready to help where

useful and practical work in Palestine is to be done, namely, the Jewish National Fund, was first approached. The directors of the Jewish National Fund promptly appreciated the gravity of the situation; they voted for the purpose the sum of £2,000 for the year 1912 (a rather



Yemenite Silversmith.

handsome amount in relation to the Fund's capital), and promised a similar amount for the year 1913. With the aid of this money building sites have already been acquired in many colonies, temporary wooden barracks have been erected, and the construction of cottages in the colonies of Petach-Tikvah, Chederah, Ness-Ziona, Bir-Jacob, &c., has begun. But it would be a great mistake to suppose that this amount will prove even remotely adequate.

A cottage that is to be to a certain extent durable and built in conformity with hygienic requirements, surrounded by a requisite garden plot, costs about £40. As we already have about 400 immigrant families in the country, 400 such cottages are required. But as a matter of fact we have also to reckon with the masses who are still expected and to prepare accommodation for them in time.

Conclusion.

We have seen what unspeakable oppression and distress our brethren in South Arabia have to suffer. We have seen that the Yemenite Jew is animated by such a passionate love for Palestine that he will often travel on foot for months with his wife and child to reach the port where he can embark on a ship that will bring him to the Holy Land. We have seen that he is infused with new life in Palestine and confers a boon upon the whole range of Jewish colonisation; and, finally, we have seen that this magnificent example of self-help is confronted with a great obstacle—the dearth of dwellings.

For us who are of the same race and faith as the harassed Jews of Yemen, but who have the good fortune to live in better circumstances, the duty is obvious. This is, not to bestow alms upon our brethren and thus undermine their sense of self-respect, but to afford them generous assistance in their laudable endeavour to help themselves. Our sense of humanity itself impels us to come to their aid in this case as they are unable, by their own efforts alone, to reach the desired and necessary goal.

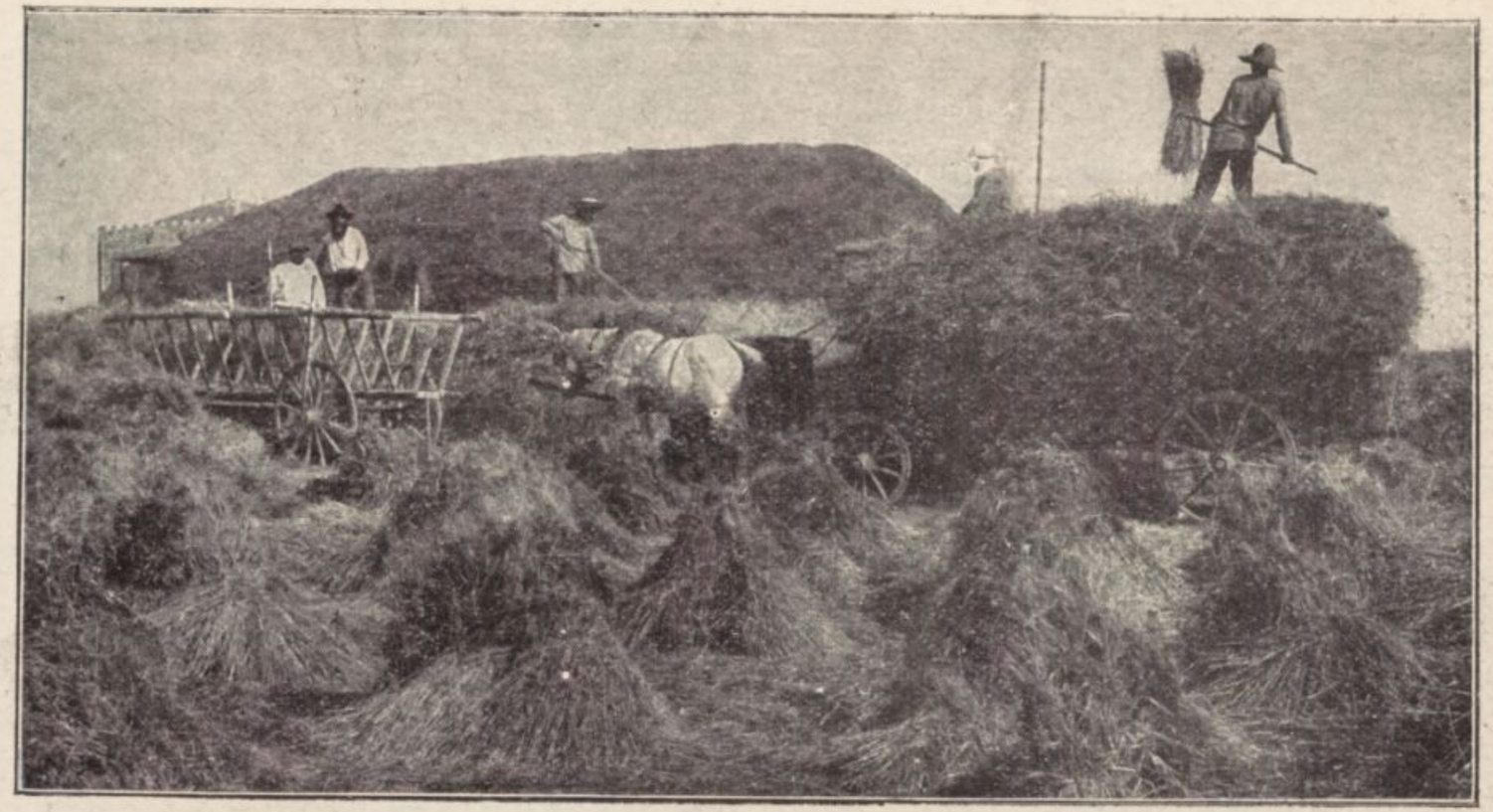
We must build them houses! No large and expensive structures, but simple, practical cottages, surrounded by a little garden.

The Jewish National Fund has pointed out the way. It has voted £4,000 for this purpose. It has gone further: it has undertaken to organise the measures for further

aid. It has begun to collect donations for this object through a special department, which will be booked and administered separately. The cost of cottage and garden for a single family is £40 (or $200). The Jewish National Fund has decided that each of these cottages shall bear the name of its founder as a permanent memorial of his humanitarian sympathy—a lasting monument which everybody can easily erect to himself or dedicate to another. Already a great number of building donations have been received from private persons, societies and communities.

Brothers and sisters, you who have been touched with the inmost sympathy for the fate of the Yemenite Jews—healthy and robust by nature, but harried and oppressed, yet roused to self-help—show that you are still Jews, ever responsive to the call of humanity.

The work of relief in this cause cannot be the task of a religious or political party in Jewry. The whole of Jewry must unite in helping the Jewish National Fund to crown its public-spirited efforts with success.



Harvest-tide.

Appendix.

THE JEWISH NATIONAL FUND.

Its Organisation, Growth and Activity.

The Jewish National Fund (Keren Kayemeth Le Jisroel) was founded in 1901. It is registered as a limited liability company in England and is administered by a Board of Directors consisting of the following:—Dr. M. I. Bodenheimer, Cologne (Chairman); Dr. Arthur Hantke, Berlin; Leopold Kessler, London; Johann Kremenezky, Vienna; Dr. E. W. Tschlenow, Moscow; Professor O. Warburg, Berlin; and David Wolffsohn, Cologne.

Its bankers are: The Jewish Colonial Trust, London, and the Anglo-Palestine Company, Jaffa. Auditors: Jackson, Pixley and Co., London.

The object of the Jewish National Fund is to purchase land in Palestine for settlement by Jews. Its assets amount at present to over £150,000, of which three-quarters are invested in Palestine. Its income, which is made up mostly of small contributions but also comprises bequests and other donations, amounted:

In 1908 to	£13,750	In 1910 to	£21,250
„ 1909 „	£20,250	„ 1911 „	£27,500

and in 1912 to £28,960.

COLONISING ACTIVITY.

Promotion of Agriculture and Rural Settlements.

On the railway track from Jaffa to Jerusalem the National Fund owns two estates, Hulda and Ben Shemen, upon which groves of olives and other trees are planted. An agricultural farm upon the intensive system is also carried on there. The amount of the investment of the National Fund in these estates on June 30th, 1912, was about £20,000.

In the region where the Jordan flows into the Sea of Tiberias the National Fund also owns two estates, Kinereth

and Dagania. The former is leased to the Palestine Land Development Company, and the latter to the "Erez Israel" Settlement Company. Upon the farms established on these estates Jewish labourers are prepared for the calling of colonists. In Kinereth a number of Jewish girls are also trained for the farming occupation.

Young Plantations at Ben-Shemen.

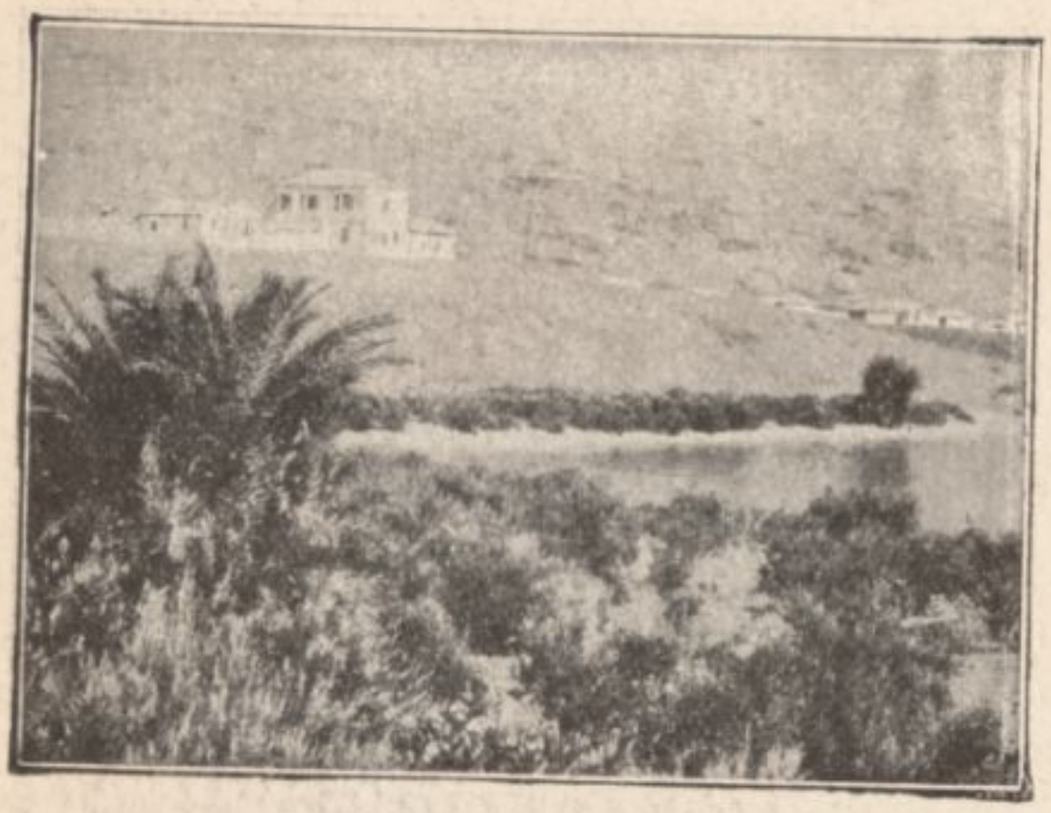
In the fruitful Plain of Jezreel, on the railway track leading from Haifa to the East Jordan region, lies the estate of Merchabia, which also belongs to the National Fund. This estate is being cultivated by the Co-operative Settlement Company, which is financed by the "Erez Israel" Settlement Company and which was established there in 1910 in accordance with the ideas of the well-known sociologist, Dr. Franz Oppenheimer.

Co-operative Farm Settlement at Merchabia.

The Palestine Land Development Company, which devotes itself to the dividing up and development of small holdings in the interest of the work of Jewish colonisation, has been given by the National Fund a credit of about £12,000 for these and similar purposes.

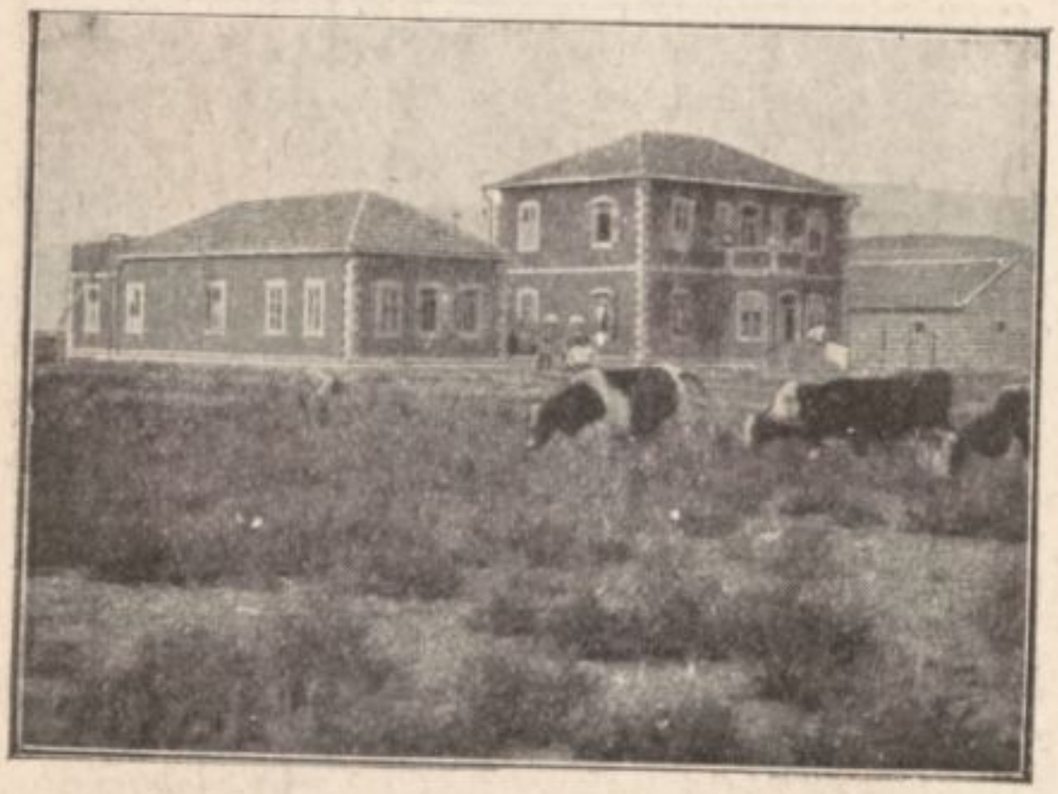
The National Fund has deposited with the Jewish bank in Palestine—the Anglo-Palestine Company—various sums

amounting to a total of more than £9,600 to provide loans for Jewish colonies and individual colonists, as well as co-operative companies, for agricultural purposes.



Kinereth Farm on the Sea of Tiberias.

In the colonies of Petach-Tikvah and Chederah the National Fund has established two large homes for unmarried Jewish labourers at a cost of £1,600. It has also built a number of houses for Jewish workmen's families in Petach-Tikvah, Rishon-le-Zion, Vadi-el-Chanin, and Rechoboth with the aid of the David and Fanny Wolffsohn Fund and the Halperin Fund, which are affiliated to it. Quite recently it also granted a further sum of £2,000 as a first instalment for the erection of several hundred houses which are intended for the accommodation of Yemenite Jews.



Co-operative Farm Dagania on the Jordan.

The Odessa "Committee for Promoting Jewish Agriculture in Syria and Palestine" has been granted a loan of £800 by the National Fund for the establishment of a Jewish workmen's colony at Ein Ganim, near Petach-Tikvah.

Upon its estate of Ben-Shemen the National Fund has established a colony for Yemenite filigree workmen of

the well-known Bezalel School of Arts and Crafts at Jerusalem.

In the colony of Chederah the National Fund possesses an orange garden and two olive gardens.

Promotion of Urban Settlements.

By granting various loans amounting to a total of £14,400 (through the medium of the Anglo-Palestine Company) the National Fund has assisted in the establishment of the well-known Jewish quarters, Tel-Aviv and Nachlath Benjamin in Jaffa, as well as Herzlia in Haifa. These quarters have already, within quite a few years, proved a boon in every respect to the entire Jewish population of Palestine.

Promotion of Institutions of Public Utility.

The National Fund has provided the Bezalel School of Arts and Crafts with two houses and a workroom at a cost of about £6,000. The object of the Bezalel is to open up new sources of livelihood to the Palestine Jews by the introduction of artistic industries upon a domestic basis into their midst. It already employs close upon 500 persons. The National Fund also provided the Hebrew Gymnasium in the Tel-Aviv quarter of Jaffa with the site as well as with its imposing building which was presented to it for this purpose (at a total cost of about £8,000).

Herzl Street, with Hebrew Gymnasium, in Tel-Aviv.

For the purchase of the plot upon which the Jewish Technical Institute is being built in the thriving seaport of Haifa the National Fund made a grant of £4,000.

Bezalel School of Arts and Crafts.

By means of a well-considered system, which is being constantly developed through daily correspondence with the permanent agency of the National Fund in Palestine and repeated journeys to the country, the National Fund strives to foster and support all branches of Jewish colonising work in Palestine in the most practical manner.

Workmen's Home in Petach Tikvah.

INCOME OF THE NATIONAL FUND.

The income of the Jewish National Fund consists mostly of small donations given both upon happy and sorrowful occasions. The poorest classes contribute their mites to the National Fund with the utmost enthusiasm, whilst large donations are also becoming more and more frequent. The National Fund has so far received the following large donations :—

B. Cahane (Vienna)	£4,000
Anonymous (Germany)	2,700
Frau Klur (Odessa)	1,500
S. Halperin (Kiev)	1,500
Roumanian Association of Chovevi Zion Societies	1,200
David and Fanny Wolffsohn Fund ..	1,000
Frau Wodonosowa (Russia)	500

Contributions of an increasing amount are now being made by Jewish communities and corporations. It is also becoming more and more customary to make bequests to the National Fund and also to contract insurance policies in its interests.

Every donation is acknowledged in the Press. Detailed tables of contributions are published every month. The books are thoroughly examined by chartered accountants and detailed balance-sheets and financial statements, with full explanatory notes and statistical tables, are published every year.

Statistical Table of National

Collecting Agency.	Total in English Currency. £ s. d.	General Donations. M	Self-taxation. M	Collecting Sheets. M	Collecting Boxes. M
Argentina	266 2 11	26.70* 3,523.82	12.46	—	892.73
Australia	45 7 7	174.25	—	—	416.66
Austria	5,756 15 9	54,002.10	2,175.69	8,231.44	20,285.29
Belgium	490 14 0	1,843.95	117.—	448.84	1,043.41
Brazil	27 7 2	520.—	—	—	—
Bulgaria	163 6 11	1,734.25	265.57	19.56	323.35
Canada	1,547 12 2	1,803.85	—	—	3,007.86
Denmark	18 3 2	7.85	—	—	70.12
East Asia	143 0 0	52.68* 184.28	—	—	35.—
Egypt	34 10 1	119.38	—	—	178.34
England	392 11 3	3,177.65	15.30	—	1,339.67
France	141 3 8	887.52	23.89	—	931.10
Germany	3,785 10 2	191.95* 12,122.85	306.—	192.04	21,252.99
Greece	18 15 2	7.29	—	—	—
Holland	595 6 3	217.22† 3,687.99	348.85	—	2,955.62
Hungary	401 15 10	825.41	75.62	2,269.59	2,691.20
Italy	115 19 8	460.93	—	—	12.—
Roumania	862 7 4	331.48	55.92	19.60	2,319.88
Russia	6,864 16 11	43,224.34	5,102.66	19.84	22,704.66
Servia	38 13 8	120.—	—	—	118.60
South Africa ..	1,577 0 10	12,158.13	—	—	2,586.70
South Slavic Countries	351 5 9	1,513.31	352.88	1,885.09	1,039.65
Sweden	47 9 5	173.20	—	95.67	323.55
Switzerland	129 9 7	418.74	161.06	—	373.88
Turkey	189 13 9‡	945.10	—	92.07	706.82
United States ..	4,958 16 3	18,503.99	1,434.46	—	18,936.50
	28,963 15 3	162,960.21	10,447.36	13,273.74	104,545.58

* Postage stamps. † Sale of articles of latent value (silver-paper, &c.). ‡ Including

Fund Contributions in 1912.

Golden Book. *M*	Olive Tree Donations. *M*	Land Fund. *M*	D. & F. Wolffsohn Fund. *M*	Workmen's Dwellings. *M*	National Fund Stamps. *M*	Telegram Forms. *M*	Total in Marks. *M*
44.50	714.62	125.49	—	—	89.—	—	5,429.32
204.—	116.40	—	10.20	—	4.08	—	—
284.42	14,071.77	1,202.04	1,445.27	10,757.15	1,940.28	3,042.75	117,438.20
897.82	1,565.04	1,080.—	4.—	2,426.—	144.—	440.—	10,010.06
—	12.—	—	—	—	26.—	—	558.—
753.66	108.75	—	—	—	86.98	40.—	3,332.12
4,727.41	2,604.97	18,017.87	—	—	1,409.04	—	31,571.—
204.—	22.03	—	—	—	58.33	8.—	370.33
93.75	—	684.79	1,050.35	816.—	—	—	2,916.85
10.20	380.49	—	—	—	10.20	5.10	703.71
2,528.32	537.81	40.80	166.14	—	153.52	48.80	8,008.01
202 50	664.20	40.50	17.82	—	112.56	—	2,880.09
6,638.85	19,752.18	1,617.45	5,422.30	18,099.92	1,558.75	68.90	77,224.18
—	324.25	—	—	—	42.80	8.—	382.34
678.50	1,599.20	—	—	—	419.79	245.04	12,144.23
324.88	1,668.83	109.17	—	23.45	114.58	93.52	8,196.25
751.60	311.60	—	—	800 —	23.06	6.50	2,365.69
8,795.88	3,313.36	344.—	—	800.—	756.—	856.—	17,592.12
28,780.71	22,005.76	958.22	1,574.88	5,109.07	10,097.08	465.35	140,042.57
402.10	120.—	—	—	—	12.10	16.10	788.90
10,155.96	3,207.78	1,440.25	782.59	—	1,632.—	208.25	32,171.66
668.48	625.27	205.20	18.86	480.91	191.37	185.10	7,166.12
186.84	109.39	—	—	—	79.61	—	968.26
1,378.83	165.07	—	15.60	—	124.—	4.—	2,641.18
1,288.15	486.19	40.50	—	—	278.20	32.28	3,869.31
13,699.47	18,702.53	12,367.72	252.59	5,468.18	11,591.35	102.67	101,059.46
83,700.83	93,189.49	38,395.68	10,940.25	36,471.37	30,954.68	5,876.36	590,755.55

£162 8s. 1d. from Palestine.

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By various Authorities. With a Foreword by
DAVID WOLFFSOHN, late President of the Zionist Organisation.

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Edited by ISRAEL COHEN.

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By ISRAEL COHEN,

Editor of "Zionist Work in Palestine."

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This is an authoritative account of the history and activity of the Jewish nationalist movement from the earliest times to the present day, and should prove indispensable to all who are in any way interested in the Jewish question. The four chapters of the pamphlet are headed: I. Aims and Aspirations. II. History and Organisation. III. Zionism and Young Turkey. IV. Colonising Work in Palestine.

EXTRACTS FROM PRESS REVIEWS.

The Athenæum.—Here the aspirations, history and organisation of the Zionist movement are compactly summarised, with further matter on the adjustment of difficulties with the Ottoman Empire and the colonisation of Palestine.

The Morning Leader.—An interesting document that tells of the hopes, fears and accomplishments of Zionism during the fifteen years it has enjoyed the attention of the world's Jewries.

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The Zionist Record (Johannesburg).—A clear and complete sketch of the achievements of Zionism. Unlike most sketches, this is not merely a dry skeleton frame-work, but pulsates with living interest in every line. We congratulate Mr. Cohen heartily upon the success of his work, which will undoubtedly gain many adherents for the cause.

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